

Monthly Newsletter

August 2012

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Featured Successes

American Swimmers Hit the Pool in Russia...

SportsUnited and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), together with U.S. Embassy Moscow and the Russian Ministry of Sport, supported a bilateral swimming exchange program that sent 24 Americans—10 boys, 10 girls, and 4 coaches—to Moscow, Russia from July 14-27. The participants, selected in coordination with USA Swimming, took part in swimming practices and engaged with their Russian peers during cross-cultural programs. The program was organized and supported by the Russian Swimming Federation. This swimming program reciprocated a 2010

program, when 24 Russian swimmers and coaches traveled to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.



The swimmers get to know one another before a long morning of drills
(Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

...While Russians Spike Away in California

From July 6-20, 23 Russians—9 boys, 10 girls, and 4 coaches — traveled to Southern California for a beach volleyball exchange program. The delegation participated in volleyball clinics with young Americans that were organized in cooperation with USA Volleyball. The group also took part in teambuilding, conflict resolution, and disability sports activities. This beach volleyball program is the reciprocal of the 2010 program that sent 24 American youth and coaches to Moscow and Anapa. This summer's beach volleyball and swimming programs are two in a series of BPC sports exchanges. Check out a [video](#) of the swimmers' experience in Moscow, as well as

photos of [swimming](#) and [beach volleyball](#) on the [Embassy Moscow Facebook page](#). (*Sports Sub-Working Group*)



Russian boys training at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, CA.
(Photo Credit: SportsUnited, U.S. Department of State)

President Putin Signs Visa and Adoption Agreements

On July 28 President Putin signed into law bilateral adoption and visa agreements. The adoption agreement will provide additional safeguards to better protect the welfare and interests of children and all parties involved in inter-country adoptions. The visa agreement will allow qualified tourist and business travelers from the United States and Russia to receive visas with longer validity periods. These travelers are now eligible to receive, on a reciprocal basis, visas valid for multiple entries during a period of 36 months. The agreement will facilitate travel and establish stronger ties between Russia and the United States, as it will benefit the largest segment of travelers in both our countries: business travelers and tourists.

Singer-Songwriter Regina Spektor Performs in St. Petersburg

The popular American singer-songwriter Regina Spektor received a standing ovation from more than 2,000 fans at the close of her July 14 performance. At the invitation of the summer youth music festival organizer Stereoletto and

with the support of the Consulate, Ms. Spektor brought her unique brand of music back to the country of her birth. Her music, which is associated with the anti-folk scene centered in New York City's East Village, is not a common genre in Russia and her concert had been eagerly anticipated on social media sites. Consul General Bruce Turner attended the outdoor event and afterwards invited Ms. Spektor to return to St. Petersburg for additional performances. Ms. Spektor, through the efforts of the Consulate's public affairs section, was also interviewed by the widely read national newspaper *Izvestiya*. (*Culture Sub Working Group*)



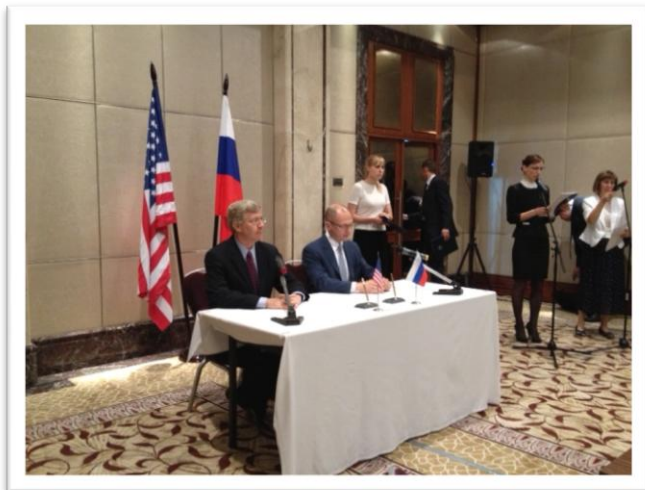
Consul General Turner congratulating Regina Spektor on her successful performance. (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General St. Petersburg)

Business, Economics, Energy

Poneman, Kiriyenko sign Joint Statement on Research Reactor Conversion

U.S. Department of Energy Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman visited Russia from June 24-28 to participate in the APEC Energy Ministerial in St. Petersburg and the Bilateral Presidential Commission's Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security (NE&NS) Working Group plenary in Moscow, as well as to discuss other bilateral issues with the Russian government and with U.S. and Russian industry. At the NE&NS Working Group plenary, co-chairs Poneman and

Rosatom Director General Kiriienko signed a [Joint Statement on Research Reactor Conversion](#). The two sides also announced that Russia and the United States will aim to conclude an agreement on civil nuclear and energy-related research and development cooperation by the end of 2012.
(*Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security Working Group*)



Signing ceremony of the joint statement on research reactor conversion.
(Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

U.S. and Russian Customs and Trade Officials Meet

On July 26, the Business Development and Economic Relations Working Group hosted a meeting between Russian Embassy officials and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officials to discuss CBP's Container Security Initiative. Additionally, staff from the Russian Trade Representative and the Department of Commerce met to discuss implementation of the BDERWG's 2012 Work Plan and cooperation on trade missions in both directions. (*Business Development and Economic Relations Working Group*)

Agricultural Working Group meets in Kazan, Russia

On May 30, USDA's Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

Darci Vetter and Russian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Oleg Aldoshin held an Agricultural Working Group meeting in Kazan, Russia on the margins of the APEC Food Security Ministerial Meeting where they discussed the current trade relationship between Russia and the United States and Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization. Russia proposed setting up a joint working group on new and emerging animal diseases. USDA will host a joint U.S.-Russia workshop on aquaculture and fish health in October 2012. On June 1, Deputy Under Secretary Vetter participated in the Working Group's Best Practices in Agricultural Sustainability Program when she visited a farm in Tatarstan with Iowa farmers and representatives from Russia's Farmers Union.
(*Agriculture Working Group*)



Deputy Under Secretary Darci Vetter and Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator Suzanne Heinen visit a dairy farm in Tatarstan, Russia
(Photo Credit: Iowa Farm Bureau)

Civil Society, Rule of Law

Software Training Program to Combat Child Pornography

From July 16-19, the Law Enforcement Section of Embassy Moscow held a training program with the Moscow City Police and the Investigative Committee to build upon the exchange held by the BPC Child Protection Sub-Working Group in February 2011. As part

of last winter's exchange, U.S. experts demonstrated in the State Duma software tools used to identify online traders of child pornography, trained Russian law enforcement in the use of the software, and provided them with free copies of it. Since then, MVD experts have used the tools to bring at least 25 criminal cases against traders of child pornography over peer-to-peer networks, resulting in a tremendous reduction of such trading on a popular P2P network. At this month's training, U.S. forensic expert Robert Erdely and Embassy Moscow Resident Legal Advisor Luke Dembosky taught best practices in the investigation of online child pornographers to police at the city level, who have expressed a strong interest in growing their cooperation with U.S. law enforcement in child exploitation cases. (*Child Protection Sub-Working Group*)

Environment, Science, Health

U.S.-Russian Geohazards Symposium

Experts from the U.S. and Russia met in Moscow July 17-19, to focus on the high risk of extreme geophysical events in the Kamchatka-Aleutian-Alaska region and to discuss collaborative steps to make the area safer for inhabitants and visitors. Participants shared their expertise in disaster risk reduction, prediction methodologies, and impact mitigation of volcano eruptions, tsunamis, and earthquakes. Experts analyzed the two countries' disaster preparedness, identified gaps in knowledge and skills, and mapped out next steps for joint efforts. Representatives from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the University of Alaska Fairbanks joined their colleagues from the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Education and Science, Roshydromet, EMERCOM,

Roscosmos, Rosaviation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Russian Geophysical Service to identify specific steps that we can take together to make our shared backyard – the Kamchatka-Aleutian-Alaska region – safer for people and their livelihoods. (*Emergency Situations and Science and Technology Working Groups*)



The opening session of the Geohazards workshop. (Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

Fellows Program Furthers U.S.-Russia Collaboration in the Biomedical Sciences

The National Institutes of Health's Visiting Fellows Program was announced on July 2. With the support of the U.S.-Russia Collaboration in the Biomedical Sciences, a public-private partnership of the Foundation for the NIH (FNIH), the Program will provide for joint U.S.-Russia collaboration in the Biomedical Sciences as well as NIH support of Russian postdoctoral fellows to prepare them for research careers on their return to Russia. (*Health Working Group*)

APEC Environmental Ministerial Meeting in Khabarovsk

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment and Science Dan Clune met with Russian Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Sergey Donskoy during the APEC Environmental Ministerial in Khabarovsk. They discussed the possibility of expanding cooperation on legacy waste cleanup—including



each side hosting experts for information exchanges. PDAS Clune suggested Minister Donskoy meet with EPA experts and visit brownfields sites himself, and Donskoy welcomed the opportunity. The U.S. delegation noted that EPA is awaiting approval of funding for visits, and Minister Donskoy said that he hoped EPA experts could visit before 2013. *(Environment Working Group)*

4th Annual Meeting of the Polar Bear Commission Convenes in Alaska

The U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Agreement Commission held its annual meeting in Anchorage June 25-27. The purpose was to review information presented by the Agreement's Scientific Working Group about abundance and trends of the Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population, and to use that information to determine a yearly quota for Native subsistence harvest. For the first time, the four commissioners (two government and two Native representatives) approved a multi-year quota of 58 bears annually, to be divided equally between Alaska and Chukotka for the next five years. The quota allows Native groups to harvest the bears for cultural, traditional, and subsistence use. Native people legally harvest polar bears in Alaska but not in Russia, where a prohibition on all harvest remains in place. *(Environment Working Group)*

Two Americans Design Visitor Centers in Baikalsky Nature Reserve

From July 18 to August 2, two U.S. Fish & Wildlife employees traveled to Baikalsky Nature Reserve in southern Buryatia, Siberia, to share expertise on the design and retrofitting of two visitor centers. The exchange, organized under the U.S.-Russia Environmental Agreement, assisted in the redesign of environmental education hubs that are increasingly accessed by foreign and domestic tourists. The Russian Government has instructed that natural lands be more open and available to the public, and improving visitor

center services and infrastructure is key to that process. *(Environment Working Group)*

Forestry Officials Embark on Wildfire Prevention Tour

The U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association and the Russian Federal Forestry Agency recently hosted a delegation to the U.S. to examine community-level efforts and solutions to wildfire prevention. The tour took place from June 20th-30th and is an activity under the U.S. State Department-funded USDA Arctic Black Carbon program to address open burning sources of black carbon in Russia, including wildfires. *(Environment Working Group)*

Culture and Education

The Eli Yamin Blues Band Tours Russia

The Eli Yamin Blues Band toured Russia July 1-7. The band – Bob Stewart on tuba, LaFrae Sci on drums, Eli Yamin on piano and vocalist Inyang Bassey – participated in three international music festivals during their Russia tour. In St. Petersburg, they played at the Usadba Jazz Festival and in Krasnoyarsk, at the International Music Festival. In Abakan, the musicians played at the Abakan International Festival, and also gave a master class for 50 musical students and teachers of the Arts Institute Jazz Department. The Eli Yamin Blues Band also treated an audience of American and Russian guests to their music at the Annual Fourth of July Spaso House Reception. *(Culture Sub-Working Group)*

Air Force Five Star Brass Band Dazzles Yekaterinburg

Leading up to July 4th, Yekaterinburg hosted the Air Force Five Star Brass Band for a series of events in and around the city. The band performed for the local war veteran's hospital, conducted a workshop and played at the Yekaterinburg orphanage for musically-gifted

children. They concluded their visit with an open-air concert for the public. (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)



The band's open-air concert attracted over 500 spectators. (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General Yekaterinburg)

“Dreams” 3D Art Exhibit Opens in Vladivostok

On July 17, with support from the U.S. Consulate General, Vladivostok-based artist, and alumnus of a State Department exchange program, Anton Bubnovskiy launched an installation art exhibit titled “Dreams” at Arka Gallery. In this installation the artist shared his perception and understanding of American culture and values through a creative arrangement of simple objects and artifacts such as jars and jeans. He inserted a small painted cloth, a piece torn from Levi's jeans, in each jar, and suspended hundreds of these jars from the ceiling of the gallery using thin strings, which together formed a 3-D image of the Stars and Stripes. The project attracted significant attention from young arts aficionados and was widely covered by the media. (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)

Contemporary Art, Modern Language discussed in Vladivostok

On July 18-20, Thomas Werner, Assistant Professor at The New School for Liberal Arts in New York, conducted a series of presentations and discussions on contemporary art, and modern language and tools of art. He also introduced his brainchild project “Bridges” that unites young artists from 31 cities in Russia and

USA in a video installation composed of three-minute videos from these young artists, who describe their lives in Russia and the United States. Several Vladivostok-based artists also joined the project, and the local arts community actively participated in all discussions. The project took place under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State and was organized by an exchange program alumnus in Vladivostok. (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)



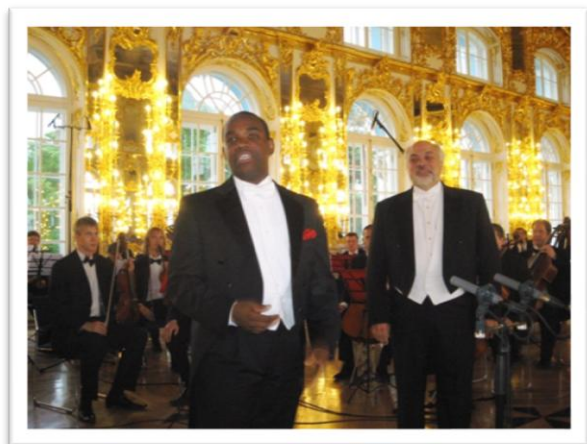
Thomas Werner poses with several Vladivostok-based artists (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General Vladivostok)

Lois Greenfield's Photographs Captures Dancers in Flight

On July 1, Consul General Turner and Deputy Chair for the Cultural Committee of St. Petersburg Boris Illarionov introduced famed American photographer Lois Greenfield and her exhibition "Celestial Bodies" at the 14th International Contemporary Dance Festival Open Look. Lois Greenfield is particularly well known for her exuberant, explosive photographs of dancers in flight. While in St. Petersburg, Ms. Greenfield participated in several events ranging from a speech at the opening of the dance festival at the ERARTA contemporary art museum to a master class. The opening of the exhibition and the festival were covered by *Time Out* magazine, Radio Russia and Radio Petersburg. (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)

Lawrence Brownlee Graces the Main Throne Room at Catherine's Palace

Famed American opera singer Lawrence Brownlee received a standing ovation at his June 24 performance at Catherine's Palace in Pushkin. His performance was part of a series organized by the American conductor Constantine Orbelian under the auspices of the annual international music festival *Palaces of St. Petersburg*. Mr. Brownlee, a tenor, impressed his sophisticated St. Petersburg audience of 500 or so music lovers with his bravura performance. Mr. Brownlee's performance was also a major media event. His concert was recorded by TV *Kultura*, which also interviewed him and Maestro Orbelian for a special music program called *Tsars' Box*. (Culture Sub-Working Group)



Lawrence Brownlee and Maestro Orbelian enjoying their standing ovation. (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General St. Petersburg)

American and Russian Contemporary Dancers Perform in St. Petersburg

On July 6, American and Russian contemporary dancers performed at the Litsedei Theater in St. Petersburg. In addition to the performance, the American dancers held master classes for more than 100 participants from all over Russia. Through their joint performance and teaching opportunities, the American dancers and choreographers built artistic and personal ties with their Russian counterparts. The extremely popular festival events were covered by local

print press and radio. (Culture Sub-Working Group)

American Saxophonist Jesse Jones, Jr. Plays St. Petersburg



Jesse Jones Jr. together with Russian jazz musicians taking their bows. (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General St. Petersburg)

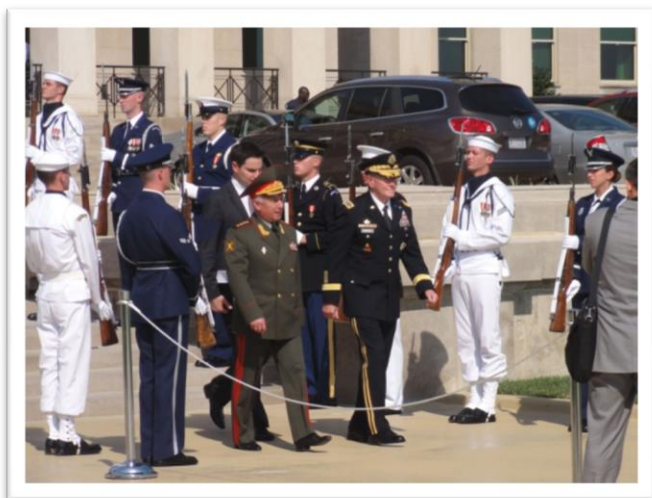
On June 16 -17, one of America's finest jazz saxophonists, Jesse Jones Jr., played two concerts at St. Petersburg's historic Peter and Paul Fortress. Hosted by the international PetroJazz open-air jazz festival and held under the auspices of the Bilateral Presidential Commission, Mr. Jones performed for several thousand jazz lovers, impressing them with his mastery both during his solo pieces and his performances with some of St. Petersburg's best home-grown musicians. The concerts received widespread coverage. Afterwards, Mr. Jesse Jones Jr. was invited by TV 100 to participate in its cultural program *ART-TV*. (Culture Sub-Working Group)

Security

Military Cooperation Working Group Co-Chairs Meet in Washington, DC

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey met General Nikolay Makarov, Chief of the Russian General Staff and First Deputy Defense Minister on July 12th at the Pentagon for the annual Military Cooperation

Working Group meeting. They discussed a wide array of international security issues, including U.S. and Russian armed forces transformation to meet current and emerging threats, Afghanistan, crises in the Middle East and North Africa, threats and developments in the Asia-Pacific region, missile defense and military-to-military cooperation. Additionally, General Makarov visited USSOCOM and USCENTCOM in Tampa on July 11. (*Military Cooperation Working Group*)



Generals Makarov and Dempsey at the Pentagon July 12 (Photo Credit: Lt. Col. James Yentz)

Colonels Working Group Meets in Garmisch, Germany

From July 18-20 U.S. and Russian delegations convened in Garmisch where they reviewed 110 events from the 2012 Work Plan and 130 proposed events for the draft 2013 Plan. They found that from a review of the 2012 Plan that current year implementation will reach 50-60 percent. The next steps for the 2013 Plan are to conclude negotiations in November conduct final review in December and gain CJCS-General Staff Chief approval in January 2013. (*Military Cooperation Working Group*)

Exercise ATLAS VISION Takes Place in Auerbach, Germany

The Russian 15th Separate Brigade and Ground Forces staff successfully conducted a staff planning exercise with the U.S. Army Europe's (USAREUR) 18th Military Police Brigade on July 16-20. USAREUR believes this was an excellent start to developing combined staff activities, setting the stage for a combined command post exercise in 2013. (*Military Cooperation Working Group*)

In Other News...

Special Representative for Intergovernmental Affairs Reta Jo Lewis Makes First Trip to Russia

Special Representative for Global Intergovernmental Affairs Reta Jo Lewis traveled to Russia July 21-31 to promote subnational cooperation. She visited oblasts and cities throughout Russia, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, and Vladivostok. While there, Special Representative Lewis met with federal and local government officials, as well as leaders from the Russian business and academic communities to discuss their interest in developing U.S.-Russia partnerships on the municipal and state level.

Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual Travels to Moscow

Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual traveled to Moscow, Russia on July 23-26 to meet with Russian officials, business community leaders, and energy industry experts. This was Ambassador Pascual's first trip to Russia since assuming his current position. On this trip, Ambassador Pascual engaged with the Russian government, private sector, and civil society on several broad themes, including global energy security, emerging trends in global energy



markets and implications for our mutual economic interests.

19th International AIDS Conference

The world's top authorities on HIV/AIDS gathered at the 19th International AIDS Conference in Washington from July 22 to 27, to share new scientific knowledge and discuss strategies and tactics for containing the AIDS epidemic. Among the experts were six Russian and international NGOs currently implementing USAID-supported HIV/AIDS projects in Russia. The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) reported on progress with medical chart audits and social surveys of patients on adherence to Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART). AIHA also presented Russian editions of two preeminent HIV/AIDS textbooks developed with USG support. Lastly GBCHealth/Russia discussed HIV/AIDS workplace issues and the role of public-private partnerships in sustaining and scaling up HIV interventions.



Calendar of BPC Upcoming Events

August 2-18: On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, two American visitor center design specialists will travel to Kronotsky Nature Reserve in Kamchatka to advise on the redesign of nature centers.

August 10-September 26: Bruce Gilden street photography exhibition on display in Yekaterinburg.

August 13-24: Two FSKN Intelligence Analysts to attend an Intel Analyst training course in Texas as part of Counternarcotics Working Group.

August 14-18: Bluegrass Festival will take place in Perm and Yekaterinburg.

August 14-15: Defense Technology Cooperation Sub Working Group meeting will occur in Washington, DC.

August 24-26: Jazz at the Hermitage Garden Festival is celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2012, hosting New York jazz band Opus 5, legendary American harmonica player Hendrik Meurkens, and pianist George Colligan.

August 25-November 13: Russian writer Alisa Genieva participates in the International Writing Program at the Iowa Writer's Workshop.

August 28: Frank Dituri photography exhibition opens in Yekaterinburg.

September 6-10: The ShowUS! Documentary film festival takes place at the 35mm Theater in Moscow.

September 13: The NBA "Basketball without Borders" Spaso House Reception.

September 15-29: Four Russian botanists will learn and observe the work of the St. Louis Botanical Garden in St. Louis.

September 17-25: The Brubeck Brothers will perform a number of jazz concerts in Russia, including at the Tchaikovsky Hall and Moscow Conservatory, as well as the Mariinsky Concert Hall in St. Petersburg.

September 24-26: Mission Russia will lead a delegation of more than 100 Russian business executives and public officials to MINExpo 2012 in Las Vegas.

September 27: Ambassador McFaul will host a SelectUSA Investment Forum to promote the U.S. as an attractive investment destination to potential Russian investors.

September 22-29: Vladivostok International Film Festival takes place.

October 4-10: The "Tizer" jazz band concerts in Vladivostok and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

October 6-14: A group of 20 male and female youth ice hockey players and 4 of their coaches will travel to Moscow for an ice hockey cultural exchange.

October 18-22: A San Diego-based 15-member Mariachi band will perform in concerts in Vladivostok, Slavyanka, and Ussuriysk.

